


Spring 5-20-2012

A Lone Nut in Compton:Lessons in Community Engagement with TreePeople in South Los Angeles

Jason Schlatter
SIT Graduate Institute

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones>

 Part of the [Civic and Community Engagement Commons](#), [International and Intercultural Communication Commons](#), [Interpersonal and Small Group Communication Commons](#), [Organizational Communication Commons](#), [Other American Studies Commons](#), [Other Social and Behavioral Sciences Commons](#), [Social and Cultural Anthropology Commons](#), and the [Urban Studies and Planning Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Schlatter, Jason, "A Lone Nut in Compton:Lessons in Community Engagement with TreePeople in South Los Angeles" (2012).
Capstone Collection. 2523.
<https://digitalcollections.sit.edu/capstones/2523>

This Thesis (Open Access) is brought to you for free and open access by the SIT Graduate Institute at SIT Digital Collections. It has been accepted for inclusion in Capstone Collection by an authorized administrator of SIT Digital Collections. For more information, please contact digitalcollections@sit.edu.

A Lone Nut in Compton..

A LONE NUT IN COMPTON: LESSONS IN COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT WITH TREEPEOPLE
IN SOUTH LOS ANGELES

Jason Edward Schlatter

PIM 70

A Capstone Paper submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for a Master of
Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management at SIT Graduate Institute in Brattleboro,

Vermont, USA

May 28, 2012

Advisor: Ken Williams

Consent to Use of Capstone

I hereby grant permission for World Learning to publish my Capstone on its websites and in any of its digital/electronic collections, and to reproduce and transmit my CAPSTONE ELECTRONICALLY. I understand that World Learning's websites and digital collections are publicly available via the Internet. I agree that World Learning is NOT responsible for any unauthorized use of my Capstone by any third party who might access it on the Internet or otherwise.

Student name : _____

Date : _____

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The Reflective Practice Phase can be a long and grueling process at times, and I am grateful for the support and encouragement of my friends and colleagues. In particular, for their insight and professionalism, I would like to thank my on-campus advisor, Ryland White, and my RPP advisor, Ken Williams. Next, I am grateful to Dr. Elke Rechberger of Psychology by Design, not only for providing me my first internship but also, more importantly, for her friendship. I would not have had as much fun or learned as much about community engagement in South LA without Torin Dunnivant and Rachel Malerich, and the wonderful staff at TreePeople. Thank you for all that I have learned and continue to learn from each of you.

Taking care of official business is important; so is keeping one's sanity during the process. Thank you Jim Madden, Micha Gonzalez, Erik Byrne and all my friends home and abroad for keeping me laughing and moving along. For their abundant generosity in providing a roof over my head and a welcome supportive environment during the last year, I am eternally grateful to Dana Hursey & Jeremy Cowin, and Peter Massey & Dave Ferguson. To Janaki Natarajan, and Peder & Gretchen Rude, I thank you for making it possible for me to attend Capstone Seminar and for your love and friendship. Of course, I also would not have gotten far without the love and support from my family, my dad, Stan, Iliana, & Edward. Finally, I would like to acknowledge my mother, Catherine Bergmann, not just for keeping me in groceries but for also being a model of tenacity, courage, and perseverance with a smile. Thank you.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	2
PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE.....	3
BACKGROUND	5
 RELATIONSHIPS	 9
THE NEIGHBORHOODS	10
COMMUNITY PARTNERS.....	11
 LESSONS LEARNED	 13
PERSONAL APPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK.....	32
 RECOMMENDATIONS.....	 37
 DESIGN AND METHODS	 44
METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS	47
ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS	49
 CONCLUSION.....	 51
 BIBLIOGRAPHY.....	 53
 APPENDICES	 56
RESEARCHER BIOGRAPHY	69

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 – Roadmap for South LA Regional Engagement Intern

Figure 2 – TreePeople South Los Angeles Region

Figure 3 – TreePeople Fact Sheet 2012

Figure 4 – TreePeople Fact Sheet 2011, Excerpt

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Compton Unified School District – CUSD

Educational Manager – EM

Inglewood Unified School District - IUSD

Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgendered - LGBT

Los Angeles Unified School District – LAUSD

Regional Manager – RM

Social Justice Learning Institute – SJLI

TreePeople – TP

ABSTRACT

The following study was conducted as an exploration of the community engagement practices of the Los Angeles based nonprofit organization, TreePeople. The intention of this study was to foster a deeper understanding about the theories and practice of the “outsider” TreePeople’s community engagement initiatives in the region of South Los Angeles, with particular emphasis on the communities of Compton, Inglewood, and historic South Central. I attempted to synthesize a collective narrative about the way TreePeople interacts with its constituents and community partners by drawing upon the experiences and perceptions of TreePeople staff, community partners, and community members. The individual experiences were shared specifically during five separate interviews and a seven-member focus group comprised of monolingual Spanish speaking women. Throughout the report I combined, the use of participatory observation and material discovery to supplement my exploration of the success, effects, and lessons learned by TreePeople’s community engagement practices. They have worked to operationally embody their belief that *“positive change for Los Angeles comes from communities leading it.”* I submitted that the basic tenets of going where invited, and being influenced by constituent and community partner feedback regarding the delivery and design of programs, contributed directly to the support and effectiveness of TreePeople and the benefit of the communities. However, I recommended that incorporating culturally appropriate means of engagement, opportunities for shared leadership, the engagement of local markets, among other practices, could result in greater impact and stronger communal partnerships.

INTRODUCTION

As an intern, I sometimes felt like an outsider; someone who officially contributed as part of the group while simultaneously not really belonging. Like a lone nut, being eyed with an odd mix of suspicion and respect. My great passion for helping groups of people work together to achieve common goals lead me to seek out a nonprofit with a community engagement component. Initially I interned with the LGBT Aging Alliance, a networking group of LGBT business professionals who provided services to the senior citizens within the LGBT population. I was told that the organization wanted to become a nonprofit to provide cultural sensitivity trainings and build formal alliances with other service providers to the LGBT senior community. After a month, I discovered that the leaders had charged ahead without followers. In fact, less than 10% of the populace wanted to change from a business-networking group to a nonprofit organization. Since there would be no nonprofit, I quickly refocused and landed a position at TreePeople (TP). This Course Linked Capstone springs from my 6-month stint with TreePeople as their South Los Angeles Regional Engagement Intern. In that position I directly participated in the expansion and support of the community engagement program with particular emphasis on Compton, Inglewood, and historic South Central. My duties included creating pathways of engagement, providing field concepts, and researching current interactions with regional contacts. Additionally, I lead 20 staff members through a long-term visioning process and the creation of a short-term work plan to accomplish their goals. Shared below are some of my experiences, lessons, and recommendations from being a lone nut in Compton.

PURPOSE AND SIGNIFICANCE

The purpose of this report was to share and examine the community engagement practices utilized and experienced by TreePeople and community members in the South Los Angeles areas of Inglewood, Compton, and historic South Central. The study resulted in a deeper understanding of how the interactions between community leaders, community partners, and TreePeople have created both an explicit and a nuanced presence in Los Angeles. Throughout this report, community partners are defined as organizations native to, or based in, the South Los Angeles region. Whereas TreePeople, a nonprofit organization, is outside and non-native to those regions yet wishes to work in those communities.

This report may be of significance to the nonprofits, community partners, and members of the greater community at-large. One purpose of the study was to develop a deeper understanding of the interaction between nonprofits and community. Secondly, this report sought to explain the ways in which the nonprofits affected community life in those regions. This study may be useful for researchers who are interested in looking at the field of community engagement in the future. In particular it may serve as a base for further research into engagement practices used in communities with a large population of non-English speakers who originate from collectivist cultures.

The basis of this report, and the included examples, came from my experience as a participative observer, as well as interviews of TreePeople staff, a community partner, and a focus group of seven community members (see Appendix E) involved in an ongoing

A Lone Nut in Compton..

TreePeople program. For clarity, at TreePeople I was a participant-as-observer (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p. 206) in that I was active and fully participated in activities and everyone knew I was a student researcher, specifically researching community engagement. From my perspective as the community engagement intern at TreePeople, there was a purposefully crafted connection between the nonprofit and the community at large. The purpose of the study was to explore the engagement practices of TreePeople, the possible relationships among community partners and the nonprofit, and those that might have existed between the nonprofits and the community in which they sought to work. I hoped to make those tacit relationships more explicit and in doing so, my report will enrich the understanding of the link between TreePeople and the health and growth of the South Los Angeles community, as well as enrich the understanding of their community engagement tactics. I have conducted several separate interviews and a focus group (the latter as a member of TreePeople rather than an independent researcher). By exploring these engagement practices, I hoped to bridge participant's perspectives in order to create a more concrete understanding as to the existence and health of engagement practices between TreePeople, their community partners, and the South Los Angeles communities of Inglewood, Compton, and historic South Central. It is my goal that this report will establish a greater source of information for future research on the topic.

Concept Topic	Community Engagement
Topic Statement	Exploring the theory and practice of community engagement exerted by TreePeople, and their cooperative community partners, in the South Los Angeles area of Inglewood, Compton, and historic South Central.

Primary Question

How does the “outsider” nonprofit, TreePeople, frame and enact their community engagement practices in South Los Angeles?

Sub-Questions

- *What, if any, influence do these communities have on the TreePeople’s nonprofit activities?*
- *What is the influence trend, and engagement practices of TreePeople, in relation to community partners and members?*
- *What does a regionally based nonprofit (aka community partner) experience in its relationship and work with TreePeople?*

BACKGROUND

TreePeople, founded in Los Angeles, California in 1973 by Andy Lipkis, is comprised of 53 employees, and a volunteer base of over 10,000 individuals. Their mission is: to inspire, engage and support people to take personal responsibility for the urban environment, making it safe, healthy, fun and sustainable and to share the process as a model for the world. TreePeople is an environmental nonprofit that unites the power of trees, people, and technology to grow a sustainable future for Los Angeles. Simply put, their work is to help nature heal our cities. The main vehicle used to achieve this mission is the planting and care of trees. Trees mean cooler temperatures, cleaner air, replenished groundwater supplies and a safer, healthier, more beautiful city (McPherson et. al., 2000 & Sullivan & Kuo, 1996). The goal being to have a functioning community forest in every neighborhood. In order to accomplish this mission, TreePeople employs a number of programs that are community based and focus on tree planting, care, and rainwater capture. According to the US Forestry Division, a city the size of Los Angeles should have

A Lone Nut in Compton..

tree canopy coverage of 25% (McPherson, Simpson, Xiao, & Wu, 2008). Los Angeles has a canopy of 21%. Although Los Angeles as a whole is below this benchmark, portions of the city, like Beverly Hills enjoy a tree canopy of nearly 40%. Whereas other portions are significantly below this standard, with some measuring a tree canopy of only 1-3% (McPherson, et. al., 2008). Those areas with the least amount of canopy are also the most economically and socially challenged (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010 & Mosley, et. al, 2003).

In light of this research, TreePeople made the decision to focus its efforts and energies on those regions with the greatest disparity: South Los Angeles and the Northeast Valley. In the South Los Angeles areas of Compton, Inglewood, and historic South Central, they are now working with the community to radically correct this inequity and create a larger healthy canopy and stronger community of support. Similar work, with the addition of rainwater capture programs, is happening in the Northeast Valley with particular emphasis on Pacoima and Sun Valley. It is their aspiration that the success people in these regions create will spill over to neighboring areas to reach their goal...a functioning community forest in every neighborhood. In order to attend to these newly derived needs, the organization developed a community engagement team complete with regional managers who directly oversee forestry projects and programs in their regions and are responsible for developing the community tree care teams and support staff necessary to build and grow.

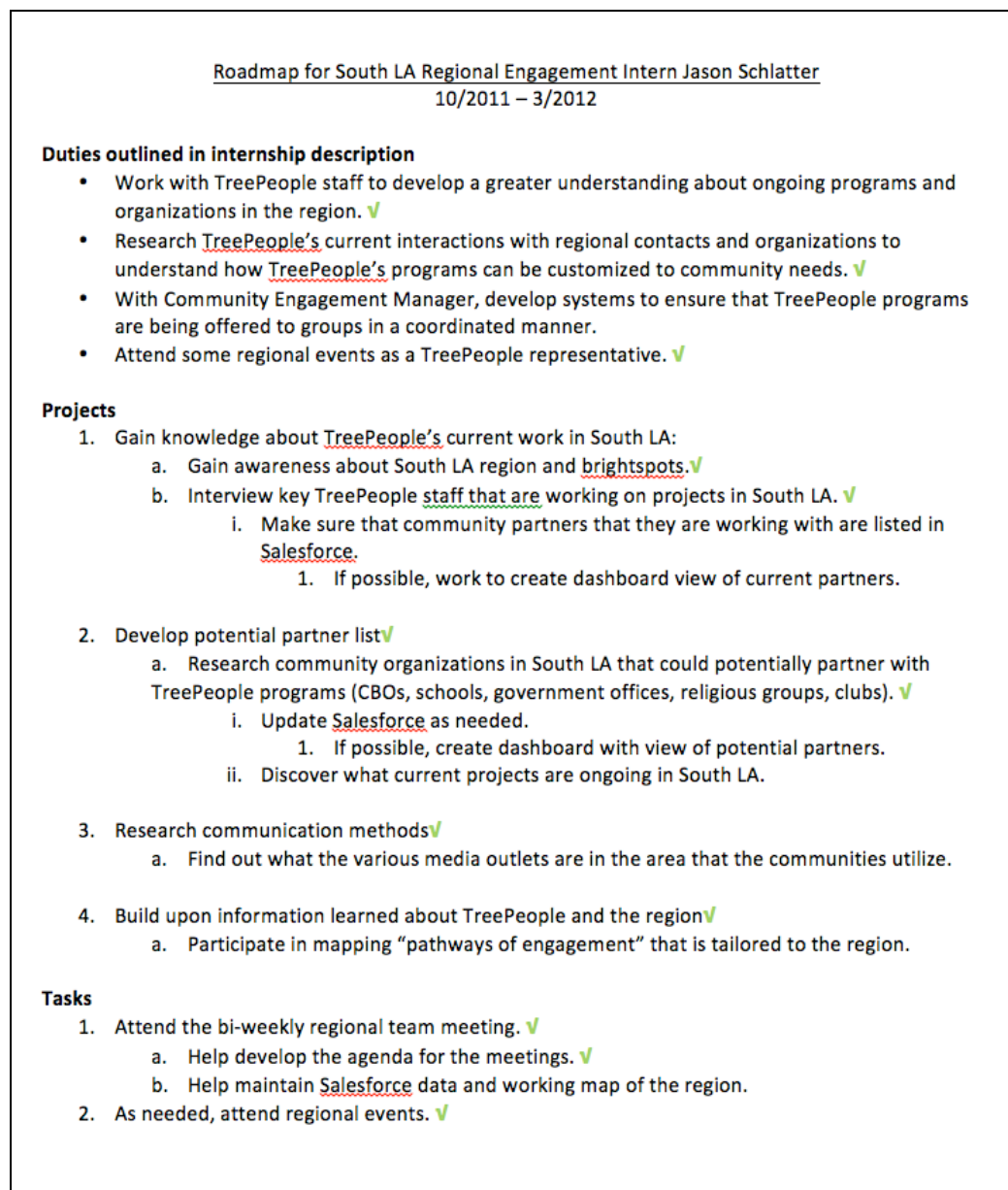
This is where I came into the picture. For the last year, the community engagement intern for the South Los Angeles area had been responsible for researching local

A Lone Nut in Compton..

community organizations that might be a strategic partner. They had worked in data entry to build TreePeople's Salesforce database of information.

The following was given to me as the outline, which I was intended to follow in my position at TreePeople.

Figure 1 – Roadmap for South LA Regional Engagement Intern



A Lone Nut in Compton..

The above figure is a general outline of my duties and responsibilities given to me at the outset. I added and expanded my role during my tenure. I lead a group of 23 senior management and staff in the development of a 10-year strategic plan for both regions. I oversaw the creation of the action plan that the regions would follow for the year 2012. I visited Compton GreenTeams, captured stories and instant feedback from recipients at a fruit tree distribution in Inglewood, and participated in meetings with marketing and communication to influence culturally appropriate approaches to materials and people, including the use of branding. Additionally I created pathways of engagement for each of the three “bright spots” in the South Los Angeles region. I adapted tools for assessment and evaluations, researched engagement methods, and introduced the internationally accepted standards for stakeholder engagement. With the Compton regional manager, I created a list of questions for the community liaisons employed by the school district to help gain a better understanding of how that community interacts with the schools and how TreePeople might better engage with them.

This questionnaire then became the base for the rest of the regional managers to use with all of their community partners they were currently working with. In short, I developed one of TreePeople’s first tools of engaging with their community partners to discover how they were being viewed in the community, assess how TreePeople was working with the community partner, discover what community engagement methods were working for them, and to learn if there were any unintended consequences of TreePeople’s actions or blind spots. At the end of my tenure, I conducted a focus group of seven monolingual Spanish-speaking women to evaluate the engagement process of

A Lone Nut in Compton..

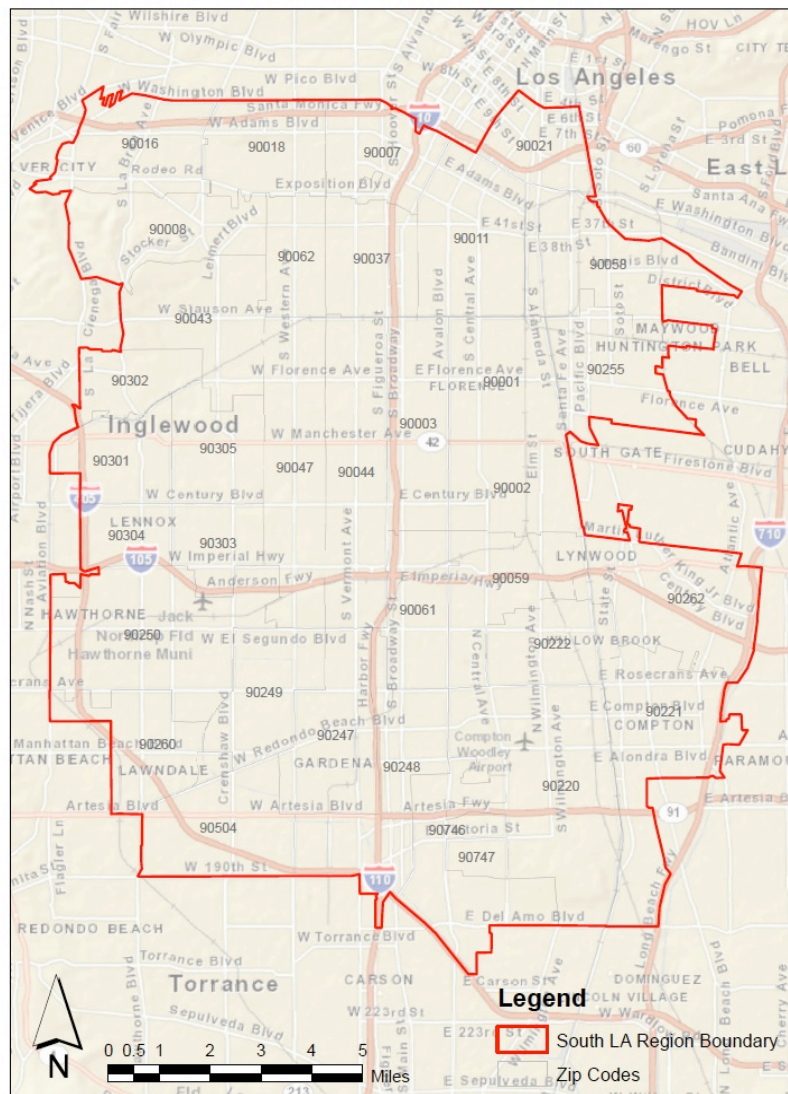
TreePeople in one particular neighborhood in Compton. The results of which highlighted a potential blind spot. How I came to select this particular group of women from TreePeople's participants is discussed more in-depth in the Methods section.

RELATIONSHIPS

To help visualize, here is a map of TreePeople's South Los Angeles Region. The area enclosed by the red line indicates the boundaries of their regional focus.

Figure 2 – TreePeople South Los Angeles Region

TreePeople South Los Angeles Region



THE NEIGHBORHOODS

The regional audiences for TreePeople's community engagement practices, related to the focus of this report, are the community members of South Los Angeles. In particular they are the residents of TreePeople's "bright spots": the City of Compton (lower-right), the City of Inglewood (left-center), and the neighborhood identified as Historic South Central (top-center) as shown in Figure 2.

The City of Compton encompasses the zip codes of 90220, 90221, and 90222 (See Appendix F). Compton has, per the 2010 U.S. Census Bureau, a population of 96,455, 33% of which are African American and 65% are Hispanic in origin. Additionally the Bureau reports that this is a young population, the median age is 28 years old, and only 27% of population are older than 45. The median household income is \$42,000 for a family of four. The Bureau claims that the 24% of the people are in poverty [Note: Poverty rate based on US national metrics. Los Angeles metrics are \$75.5K minimum household income for family of 4 with two working parents (CBP, 2010)]. Compton has a tree canopy of 6% with impervious surfaces reaching 69% (Note: Zip Code 90221 not included in studies). Compton has 38 schools serving 27,369 students (CUSD, 2011-2012) and TreePeople is now working directly with 25% of them.

The City of Inglewood encompasses the zip codes of 90301, 90302, 90303, and 90305 (See Appendix G). Per 2010 Census Bureau, Inglewood's population is 109,673 [44% African American, 51% Hispanic] with a median age of 33. Sixty-nine percent of all households average family size of 3 with a median household Income of \$42,000. People in

A Lone Nut in Compton..

poverty: 18% [Note: Poverty rate based on US national metrics. Los Angeles metrics are \$75.5K minimum household income for family of 4 with two working parents (CBP, 2010)].

Tree Canopy in Inglewood is 9% and impervious surfaces equaling 70% of the total area.

Historic South Central is a neighborhood in Los Angeles situated near city-center. TreePeople, using zip codes, identifies this area as that which falls into zip codes 90007, 90011, and 90037 (See Appendix H). In one of the most impoverished areas of town is situated the University of Southern California, squarely in this region but retains a separate zip code, which is excluded from TreePeople's region of focus. Unfortunately it was much more difficult, and remains so, to obtain exact Census data based on zip codes. In order to approximate the area, TreePeople uses the following information from the 2010 Census in identifying this particular region in terms of demographics. Averaging out the Willowbrook, Florence Graham, and Walnut Park CDPs, an approximate demography was created for historic South Central. This area has a population of 115,336 [14.5% African-American, 84% Hispanic] with a median household income of \$35,000, with 4.4 persons per household. People in poverty – 27% [Note: Poverty rate based on US national metrics. Los Angeles metrics are \$75.5K minimum household income for family of 4 with two working parents (CBP, 2010)] South Central's tree canopy, pending on definition of all of these boundaries, varies from 1 to 12%.

COMMUNITY PARTNERS

Community partners are those nonprofit or governmental organizations that are local to, and operate within, TreePeople's areas of focus. The list includes the Social Justice Learning Institute (SJLI), the Los Angeles Unified School District (LAUSD), the Inglewood

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Unified School District (IUSD), the Compton Unified School District (CUSD), and The Compton Initiative. Other partners are involved in TreePeople's endeavors to varying degrees but were not included in this report due to time constraints.

SJLI was started by D'Artagnan Scorza in 2007 and grew out of the work of the Black Male Youth Academy at Morningside High School in Inglewood, California. According to their website, they are "dedicated to improving the education, health, and well-being of youth of color by empowering them to take hold of their educational future using research as a tool for community and social change." According to their founder, the youth came up with the idea that access to fresh fruits and vegetables was a way for communities to take hold of their health and eating habits. Food justice was of great importance to the community and so began their campaign "100 Seeds of Change". This initiative is a comprehensive, citywide plan that will create gardens at homes, schools, city parks and other urban locations. The goal is to empower residents to be active in growing their own food collaboratively in a local network.

The Compton Initiative is poised to partner with TreePeople on their upcoming community events. Founded in 2005, the Compton Initiative is a 40-year commitment to bring restoration and hope to the community of Compton by partnering with other entities. Every quarter, thousands of community volunteers take to the streets in an organized manner to repaint, refurbish, and rebuild selected sections of town. The partnership was not finalized at the time of this writing but if the two entities agree to work together, it will provide TreePeople access to more community members and a chance to garner further

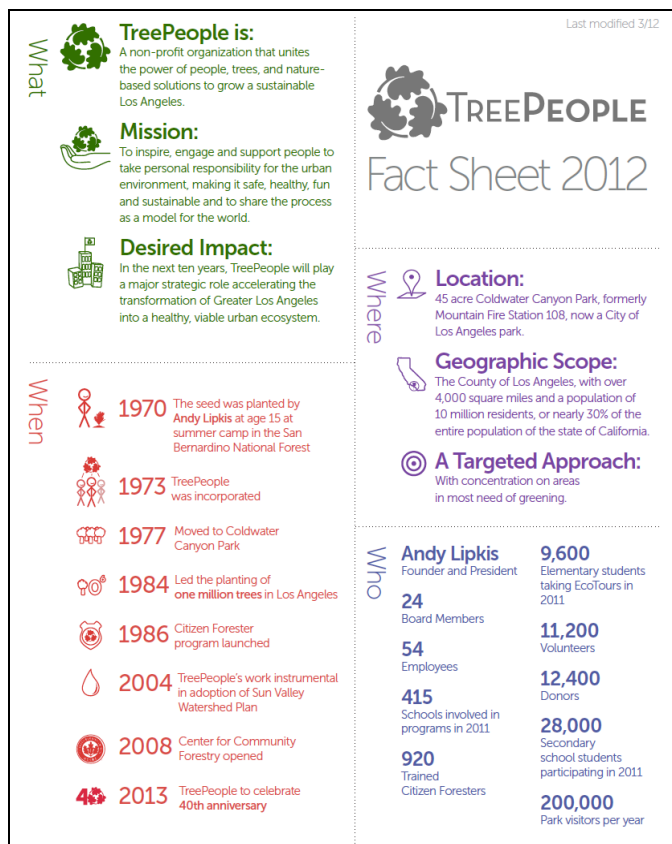
A Lone Nut in Compton..

communal input and participation. It may also go a long way to fulfilling a beneficial and collective impact on Compton.

LESSONS LEARNED

In this report I shall offer my experiences, along with those that live and work there, as a critique of the approach used by TreePeople in each of these areas and with those listed community partners. TreePeople reaches out to the public in many ways, but there is one particular method that they use annually, the Fact Sheet. The Fact Sheet is an outward facing document that is available on the trails in the park, and is readily available at any event TreePeople attends. A copy of the front of the document is seen in Figure 3.

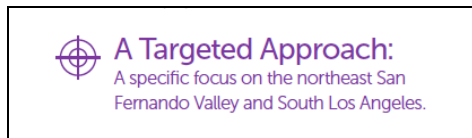
Figure 3 – TreePeople Fact Sheet 2012



A Lone Nut in Compton..

It is a fairly innocuous document. However, bearing in mind that TreePeople is heavily focusing on the region of South Los Angeles, it chose to use the words Targeted Approach on their 2011 and 2012 documents. Note Figure 4 taken from the 2011 version.

Figure 4 – TreePeople Fact Sheet 2011, Excerpt



In 2011, TreePeople utilized a graphic of a gun site referencing the targeted approach they were taking, specifically pointing to South Los Angeles. I began my internship in October. It was then that I saw this outward facing document with the gun scope icon. Bringing this to the attention of the community engagement manager, I pointed out that the use of a gun site highlighting a targeted approach to South Los Angeles, an area rife with shooting and gang violence, was inappropriate. That no one looked at it in context was shocking to me. One might assume it pointed to their novice standing as community engagers but the reality is more complex. I felt, it pointed more to a lack of communication internally between marketing and those who are involved with the communities directly. As you can see in Figure 3 the gun site is no longer used and the regions are no longer directly highlighted.

This example spurred me to research exactly how TP was working in this region in regards to cultural sensitivity. A question that burned for me was why is TreePeople, a group of mostly middleclass white environmentalists, working in South Central, Compton, and Inglewood? And secondly, how did they get there? As indicated previously, these are

A Lone Nut in Compton..

areas of high poverty and largely comprised of Hispanic and African American populace (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). I doubted that trees are first and foremost in the community's mind in terms of need, let alone want. Alinsky is quite adamant about going only where one is invited (1971). Had TreePeople been? Indeed, in one of their first forays into Compton, a Regional Manager (RM) was asked that very question, "Who asked you to come here?" Fortunately, in this instance they were ready and able to say, "you did." A member of the CUSD had invited TreePeople to do some tree planting and care on one of their campuses. I cannot say that this person who initially invited TreePeople was a "native leader" (Alinsky, 1969) speaking for the community. That individual may have, as Alinsky suggests, saw themselves as a leader because they were a worker in a formal organization. However, the parents of that school who became involved in the project, invited TreePeople to stay and continue based on their experience. *"Just like in Compton, we got in with one GreenTeam, earned their trust, and they shared it with everyone that they knew."* TreePeople may not have been invited initially by a native leader however, in Compton, they went were invited by groups of parents who wanted to work with them on their specific school campuses.

Several years ago, TreePeople went into a poor, largely Spanish speaking, area of Los Angeles and super imposed its programs and "solutions" onto the region. The organization was working under its community outreach guidelines doing what many nonprofits do. "Knowing" what's best for the area, they imposed their principles and then tried to get the community to follow along. They failed miserably, *"We were not invited into Wilmington, and we got no where."* The organization, shortly thereafter, changed its

A Lone Nut in Compton..

community outreach department to community engagement. More than semantics, they purposefully chose to move towards learning from and listening to the community rather than the mono-directional approach of outreach. As it was put to me ,

“Our programming used to be one-size-fits-all. So, we shifted our programming through the process of being able to listen to folks or, at least, attempting to listen to people; we changed.”

“TreePeople felt that outreach meant you were talking to people and community engagement conveyed that you were actually talking with people. You were listening and reacting and able to actually modify programming from that approach.”

The change in attitude also resulted in a change of management staff to the current community engagement manager.

Starting in Compton with this new approach, the regional manager (RM) partnered with a TP educational manager (EM), a native Spanish speaker. Together they began to co-create GreenTeams; groups of community members who take ownership of what is planted where, and take responsibility for the care and maintenance of the trees they plant. The RM found success in this community by following the maxim of effective communication where the people made their own decisions (Alinsky, 1971). This was confirmed by the focus group I conducted for TreePeople comprised of members of the GreenTeam at Laurel Street Elementary in Compton. The members of this focus group were pleased that they were not merely allowed to participate but actively sought out to be the main guides, directors, and owners of the activities undertaken in their area.

“Yes, we are listened to. “ - FG member 6

“We have a choice where trees go and when we have ideas or comments [RM] listens to our opinions.” – FG member 1

“When we give one that doesn’t seem to work or make a comment, she doesn’t just say ‘no’. There’s an explanation given to us with it, why it won’t work.” – FG member 2

A Lone Nut in Compton..

"If something is wrong or missing, we are allowed to say how we feel about it. We can have an influence in the involvement in part of the community where trees are going."
- FG member 1

Because of the EM and RM's respect for and communication with these communities, TreePeople is now working in 25% of the CUSD and has been approached by the Compton Initiative with a potential to work together.

Through working in this manner, TreePeople not only fostered the trust and relationships necessary to affect the neighborhood, but the community were able to affect change in the organization and its programs. TreePeople's Citizen Forester program, in a nutshell, teaches people how to plant and care for trees, and take personal responsibility for their neighborhoods. The plan was drawn up to have the group divide responsibilities hierarchically at their first meeting. There are various coordinators for volunteers, logistics, etc. and one person to oversee the group as a whole who acts as liaison with TreePeople. The plan was very structured and formalized. When TP decided to work in monolingual Spanish speaking areas, they translated the materials and created the Citizen Forester en Español program. When they first used it in Compton, the plan backfired on the first day.

On my first ride-along to Compton, the RM told me about this incident. The RM followed the plan, as trained and written, with a large group of Hispanic women at Anderson Elementary School. According to the plan, the group was to divide itself into individual responsibilities and titled positions. Herein lay the first problem. Most of the women in that group were from either Mexico or Ecuador, collectivist countries. In collectivist countries, the society fosters strong relationships where everyone takes

A Lone Nut in Compton..

responsibility for fellow members of their group. Looking only after one's self and direct family is rare (Hofstede, 2001). While both countries rank highly in terms of power distance, these women were averse to employ a strict hierarchical structure in their group. So much so that they were ready to walk out of this first meeting when presented with the program as presented. Through a lot of dialogue in the moment, TreePeople's staff was able to follow the lead of the group and changed the program. By listening to the women, they were able to change the program to be relevant to the collectivist cultures of those monolingual Spanish speakers.

As I understood it from my visit to Compton and word around the office, the organization did not follow through on all of the advocacies that came out of that initial meeting. The organization relied on the RMs to translate materials as needed instead of building capacity to support monolingual engagement by translating necessary materials. After visiting with a few of the Compton GreenTeams I was able to go back to TreePeople and underscore the need for this support. Taking a tactic out of Alinsky's playbook, I held the organization to follow its own rules (1971). I simply highlighted that the organization cannot say it is committed to working with and serving these monolingual Spanish-speaking regions if they are not even willing to contextually translate the bare necessities; let alone all of the relevant materials that it freely offers the rest of their regions. Although the staff and organization at large admitted that translated materials were important and necessary, they were not working to build the capacity to meet their self described needs. Keeping the Spanish speaking participants in the dark in this manner, at the very least, showed a lack of cultural competence while simultaneously keeping the most affected

A Lone Nut in Compton..

group from full participation in solving the issues (Wolff, 2010). After utilizing this tactic and with the ongoing support of the RMs, and other staff, TreePeople began actively building this capacity. It should be noted that, as in most nonprofits, resources to do all that is needed are often scarce and likely contributed heavily to this lack of support. The organization is committed to supporting their engagement efforts and these communities and this experience might have just been the nudge it needed to act.

Another reason for some of the delay on institutionalizing what might be thought of as first steps may have resulted from the organization's shift out of a founder-leader mode. There was a larger organizational change occurring and with change comes shifting priorities and activities to ensure its survival while trying to maintain its current level of service. Learning curves were also huge components during this time of change as departments were modified and groups learned and re-learned how to work together as a team. The executive director seemed to employ a laissez-faire stance towards managing the organization.

By utilizing this tactic, rather than a traditional corporate top-down hierarchical management style, the executive director played "architect" in creating a culture of consensus and influence (Albion, 2010). More than that, I thought there was also an opportunity, if not an outright-targeted outcome, of which he was taking advantage. That is, the opportunity to develop the staff into even better collaborators and problem solvers. This was also reflective of his incorporation of the leadership qualities suggested in the human resources frame (see Appendix I) as described by Bolman & Deal (2003). This

A Lone Nut in Compton..

approach was used to empower the staff to change programming and incorporate current learning and past research into the new directions (i.e. shifting from outreach to community engagement) that will benefit the organization and help achieve its goals. In the words of some respondents:

“Staff is empowered to change programming or to offer changes to programming and the program directors are open to those changes.”

“What we are doing well is that we’re listening to people and staff and we’re allowing staff to take chances...”

As part of that internal shift and focus, the organization had hired a research fellow a few years ago to take a look into the ethnography of these regions and received some very valuable data. However, TreePeople did not incorporate the findings into their work at that time. Perhaps they were not ready as an organization to take action on the findings, but recent communal interactions were encouraging them to review those findings in light of feedback they were and are currently receiving from the regions. As one respondent put it, *“We believe in the power of people...the positive change for Los Angeles comes from communities leading it.”*

Use of language was also a key learning point. For a time, there was a question revolving around the idea of branding TP’s work in regions, as there was some uncertainty as to how to speak about their regional work. Thoughts were trending towards separating these bright spots out. For example, creating public identifiers of TreePeople - Compton and TreePeople - Inglewood. From my point of view, segregating Compton and Inglewood exoticified them. It made them separate and distinct from the work that TreePeople does everywhere else. If they were to do TreePeople - Compton then they should also do

A Lone Nut in Compton..

TreePeople - Beverly Hills. TreePeople was not doing anything in South LA that it was not also doing in other parts of the city. There was no need to make Compton, Inglewood, and South Central separate but equal. The brand is TreePeople not TreePeople+something else. The same work is being done there as elsewhere. Towards that end I wrote the following for their consideration in talking about why they are now working in specific areas.

TreePeople's main goal is, and has always been, to help nature heal our cities. Substantial work has taken place throughout Los Angeles since the organization began in 1973. A couple of years ago TreePeople took advantage of new research data and technology and discovered what they've always suspected. According to the US Forestry Division, a city the size of Los Angeles should have a tree canopy of approximately 25%. Not only is Los Angeles below this benchmark, portions of the city are significantly below this standard, with some regions measuring a tree canopy of only 1-3%.

In light of this research, TreePeople made the decision to focus its efforts and energies on those regions: South Los Angeles and the Northeast Valley. In the South Los Angeles areas of Compton, Inglewood, and historic South Central, we are now working with the community to radically correct this inequity and create a larger healthy canopy and stronger community of support. Similar work, with the addition of rainwater capture programs, is happening in the Northeast Valley with particular emphasis on Pacoima and Sun Valley.

It is our aspiration that the success people in these regions create will spill over to neighboring areas to reach our goal...a functioning community forest in every neighborhood.

I felt that this approach removed the stigma of holding up the regions as separate and refocused the discussion and the intent back to what TreePeople has always aimed to do; engage communities, united with the power of trees, to build a sustainable Los Angeles.

Something that I had learned that I believe TreePeople has experienced, and was learning in Compton, was that the groups they were working with are very hospitable. One

A Lone Nut in Compton..

of the newer GreenTeams is based out of Laurel Street Elementary School in Compton and is comprised of women who are mostly monolingual Spanish speakers. On my first visit with the RM I was pleasantly surprised to find coffee, toast, coffee cakes, and cajeta at the table. I was told, more than once, not to be shy but to help myself. These ladies provided food for the group and were very welcoming. The purpose for this particular meeting was to plan for a major tree-planting event involving 40-80 people. The main item that the group kept coming back to was food: how were they going to lay it out, who was bringing it, where would they get it, what was needed, etc. In essence, they were concerned with how they were going to take care of the volunteers. Even though there were more pressing items logistically, this area held a lot of energy for the group. It brought to mind the hospitality described by Esteva & Prakash (1998):

Hospitality is something radically different. Hosting the other has no implicit content of comparative judgment. It includes a principle of leveling...by which the foreigner, the stranger, the "Other," is given a place within the "we" hosting him/her (p. 87).

I grant that this doesn't imply trust per se but it is an extension and purposeful treating other as equal and included. I was not party to this group but I was not only welcomed but treated equally as a participant in the room; the same hospitality that they were concerned about showing the participants in their upcoming event.

In their article, *Creating High-Impact Nonprofits*, Grant & Crutchfield identified six practices that have led to success by high impact nonprofits in every sector across the country. They are: Serve and Advocate, Make Markets Work, Inspire Evangelists, Nurture Nonprofit Networks, Master the Art of Adaptation, and Share Leadership (2007).

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Looking at TreePeople through this lens I found that they are on the path to utilizing these practices in achieving success in three of these practices. In addition to serving the communities through providing free trees, tree care and maintenance, education, resources and materials, TreePeople has successfully advocated for the Low Impact Development Ordinance. Recently passed in Los Angeles, the ordinance requires new developments and significant remodels to capture, reuse, and infiltrate the first $\frac{3}{4}$ " of rain that falls on a site. A step that helps replenish the water tables and reduce the city's dependency on outside sources. Also, through Memorandums of Agreement, TP is working with the LAUSD to advocate for the removal of significant amounts of asphalt from South Central school campuses and replacing them with green permeable surfaces, including the incorporation of rain gardens in certain schools.

TreePeople has been successful in inspiring evangelists as evidenced by the 23,000 donors and volunteers who participated in reforesting the Angeles Forest, spend hours wrapping bare root fruit trees for distribution to underserved populations, attended Third Thursday workshops, and park clean up days. By creating emotional experiences that helped connect volunteers to TP's mission and take ownership in the work, they have in effect created a group of environmental evangelists. Through the word of mouth by donors and volunteers TreePeople continues to benefit from additional outside press and by the enlargement of its volunteer base.

Perhaps one of the strongest indicators of success in this area came from one of their community partners, D'Argtagnan Scorza. A native son of Inglewood, D'Artagnan is

A Lone Nut in Compton..

an Iraq War veteran and a doctoral candidate in UCLA's Department of Education. In the last few years he started both the Black Male Youth Academy and the Social Justice Learning Institute based out of his alma mater, Morningside High School, in Inglewood. In a recent interview, had this to say about TreePeople.

Rarely do, I think, we have experiences with organizations, or even with people [where] we feel so closely aligned both in your values, in your principles, and in your approach. And I think the experience that our organization has had, and that our community has had, with TreePeople has been empowering. If I had to sum up, it has been empowering. Because, you know, there are organizations who approach communities of color and make assumptions. Right? Or communities that are dealing with, or that are living in poverty, or communities that are disadvantaged or underserved and they make assumptions about the capabilities of those people. I even have organizations who are run by people of color who make those assumptions and say, "I will come in and tell you what's good for you. This is what you need to do." Right? And that is not the approach of TreePeople. And I think that's what makes our partnership so valuable. It combines the way we approach our community members meaning, we are there to help teach them how to fish but not to do it for them. And the way TreePeople does, right? So TreePeople helps to train green teams so that they can do it for themselves, so that we can render ourselves useful. ~ From an interview recorded live on January 19, 2012 at TreePeople's Third Thursday Event.

This also speaks to where I believe TreePeople is really beginning to shine, their ability to adapt. According to McLeod-Grant & Crutchfield,

High-impact nonprofits are exceptionally adaptive, modifying their tactics as needed to increase their success. They have responded to changing circumstances with one innovation after another. they have also mastered the ability to listen, learn, and modify their approach on the basis of external cues. Adaptability has allowed them to sustain their impact (2007, p.38).

TreePeople's past tactics of working in other neighborhoods were the opposite of those currently experienced by SJLI and others. Says one interviewee, "Before we weren't even affording ourselves the time to listen. We just had our process that we instituted." Now, lessons learned in Compton and elsewhere show that TP is actively listening to their constituents and have adapted programming and internal organizational practices based

A Lone Nut in Compton..

on community feedback. Lessons learned and adapted for the Citizen Forester in Español program directly affected the English version. As one respondent states that it *“is now the general Citizen Forester program; soliciting feedback and reacting to people more.”*

Another example of adaptation came from their partnership with SJLI. Instead of just giving out or planting shade trees, TreePeople has engaged in the distribution of fruit trees to these communities. A couple of years ago, D’Artagnan Scorza of SJLI approached TreePeople with an opportunity to partner in a very large project. SJLI’s “critical youth researchers” went out into their community of Inglewood and found that the community was very concerned about living in a food desert without access to healthy food sources (Scorza, 2012). By “tugging” (Wolff, 2010, p.22) on this particular issue of food justice, SJLI took the next logical step and sought out a collaborative solution. TreePeople supplied the trees and volunteers, and in their first event, January 2011, they collectively distributed about 700 trees. *“The first year we tried to just ‘first come first served.’”* Following this event, *“We called it a Q & A . . . and feedback we got was ‘you have to organize it better. People are standing waiting and there’s nothing more for them to do.’”*

TreePeople and SJLI listened to and incorporated the community’s feedback. The second fruit tree distribution, January 2012, TreePeople gave out 1,060 fruit trees to 1,000 families in Inglewood in partnership with SJLI. Instead of first-come-first-served, they assigned time slots to pick up trees. Instead of having nothing else to do than pick up a tree, TP provided planting and fruit tree care workshops, SJLI invited local vendors and doctors to provide informative health and environmental information booths. The local

A Lone Nut in Compton..

ABC News affiliate sent a cameraman to film the event and this collaborative effort got regional coverage. Because SJLI took an informal approach to solving a problem, and sought out a collaborative solution through cooperation and coordination (Wolff, 2010), SJLI and TreePeople each attained some of their goals. Inglewood residents got a chance to provide fresh fruit for themselves, while simultaneously improving the tree canopy in their neighborhood.

On their own, TreePeople also distributed several hundreds more fruit trees in Compton and South Central. Feedback from the community from these events has driven towards a deeper connection between TreePeople and the recipients. According to the RM, the Hispanic recipients in South LA have indicated their knowledge of basic fruit tree care, but have requested advanced workshops.

"I would love to have a class on grafting." FG member 1

These are workshops that are hardly ever taught in other areas and yet, if TP meets these requests, it could lead to a stronger relationship between these two groups.

Harken back to Grant & Crutchfield's (2007) six practices for creating high impact nonprofits: Serve and Advocate, Make Markets Work, Inspire Evangelists, Nurture Nonprofit Networks, Master the Art of Adaptation, and Share Leadership. Three of these practices TreePeople readily embraces and enacts. They are not yet making use of the markets through a social enterprise. Perhaps one day they might sell a portion of their nursery trees as a source of funding for fruit or shade tree distribution or other program areas.

While TreePeople is connected to networks of environmental and community based organizations, they are not yet in a position of sharing resources and leadership. There are growing community partnerships with the school districts, SJLI, and of course the Compton Initiative where leadership and focus may eventually be shared. I personally think it might benefit SJLI and TP to share leadership in their work with Inglewood's Parks and Recreation Department. SJLI wishes to help Inglewood residents feed themselves through community gardens. TreePeople wishes to help nature heal our cities through providing a healthy tree canopy. If they are able to officially share leadership by identifying their common purpose and establishing norms for communication, decision-making, and team culture (Williams, 2008, p. 160-163), their combined skills, work experience, and community base could create a large collective impact. If successful, then TreePeople and SJLI will be embracing a key element in becoming high impact nonprofits as described by Grant & Crutchfield (2007).

This current partnership seems to be equitable between SJLI and TP based on Mr. Scorza's statement above and that of TreePeople staff. However, some respondents indicate that some partnerships tend to be one-sided. One example:

"The Council for Watershed Health is more about research, it's more about instituting infrastructure change but then they overstep that community engagement step."

The intimation being, in one meeting that I attended, that TreePeople can step in and take up that part after the fact.

A Lone Nut in Compton..

It was also suggested that there were times when TreePeople was initiating projects, based upon a partner agreement, in which the community had no input. There seemed to be, at least in South Central, somewhat of a break down of their general practice of seeking communal input. According to some respondents:

"I think, with Historic South Central, it's the same. I mean LAUSD telling us what they're willing to do and how we can bring in a large partner like Disney to get involved so there's less community input on that. Which I think is a bad thing, in comparison. I think it's less, I think it doesn't help us grow as much."

"We're not just coming in and saying, 'Ok, no you're going to do it this way, this is the method, this is the right way we do it.' So that we don't portray our programming as that because I don't think that our programming is that. Though, . . . I know that there are instances where that is occurring . . . I do think that there are aspects of the Historic South Central model that is. Where the work we're doing in South Central, I mean it feels that way, you know? . . . I haven't pursued it and I guess I'm complicit in it."

"And then again, . . . the central avenue corridor, I don't get a good sense of how that's doing."

"Central corridor, I can't really say. . . .I don't necessarily know at this point if the community as a whole feels that way or even if they know about us."

I do not know if this is the case with all of TreePeople's work in that area but there is an awareness of some in the organization that there needs improvement in how this area is approached and worked with.

Based on my personal experience with TreePeople I posited to the community engagement manager that there were three ingredients of community of engagement seen as necessary to future success. These were the components suggested: involved community members, open communication with policy and decision makers, and cultivating effective community partners. Grant & Crutchfield (2007) seemed to agree. TreePeople actively worked with each of those suggested components but not all together

A Lone Nut in Compton..

in one area. Each of these communities in South LA is strong in one of these components and weak in the other two. Compton is very successful with community members and is beginning to act with community partners, but TP was not engaging with officials. I based that assessment on the fact that they have community members working in 25% of the schools in this area. These GreenTeams conducted regular community based events, which were well attended. However, the growth in numbers of community participants and GreenTeams has kept the RM so busy that they had not yet met with any of the city officials or the school board in order to begin building those top-down relationships. *"I just haven't had the time yet."*

Inglewood showed success with one strong community partner, SJLI, and had made some inroads with officials, but did not have a strong community member base. Historic South Central did not have solid community support but was seeing success with officials and decision makers, and had a strong relationship with LAUSD. The next steps forward for each of these communities will determine whether or not TreePeople is able to achieve their goals; particularly as TP sees community member involvement as essential for creating healthy forests in every neighborhood.

If TreePeople continues its success with Compton's community members in greening school campuses and can join in partnership with The Compton Initiative they will need to reach out to Compton's decision makers to institute sustainable ordinances, plant street trees, and repopulate tree canopy in their parks and recreation areas. Perhaps in a similar route TP took in Inglewood. Inglewood officials are highly committed to

A Lone Nut in Compton..

promoting a healthy environment and sustainable programs. As it was put to me, TreePeople was invited to sit on a mayoral committee with SJLI and the IUSD:

“... sitting on this committee we determined a lot of different things about green healthy walk-able fantastic things that could go on in Inglewood. But, really they [sic] wanted to start with food and food justice.”

From working with SJLI and planting two orchards on IUSD campuses and partnering for three years, *“their park and rec had begun to trust TreePeople. . . so we are planting more trees in parks with the Park and Rec Department.”* It now seems hopeful that TreePeople and Inglewood will be able to reach an official understanding and build a partnership to replenish the streets and parks with a healthy tree canopy.

This would be particularly beneficial to the city as Inglewood is in the direct flight path of Los Angeles International Airport, which causes both noise and chemical pollution. The benefits from trees in expunging these harmful pollutants (McPherson et. al., 2000) and TreePeople’s expertise and ongoing commitment to the community add to the hope that a Memorandum of Understanding with the city officials will be reached soon. If so, it will provide the necessary “in” that TreePeople seeks to directly relate to a larger portion of the Inglewood community.

In historic South Central, the challenges are, I believe, greater. The population is very poor with a lot of ethnic diversity (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010). It is also highly commercialized with large tourist attractions, older hospitals, and transit areas. Additionally, per the interviewees, this community has a history of outside organizations

A Lone Nut in Compton..

coming in making unfulfilled promises and leaving programs unfinished or under-supported.

"Folks who live in South LA are trepidacious about outside support because there's been many instances that organizations, whether it's environmentally based or otherwise, have come in promising, you know, great solutions and then not being able to execute it or trying and only being around long enough to say they accomplished stuff and then leaving and not being supportive."

"... there are areas in our city that have felt burned by organizations coming in and doing something to them that sounded great and then the organization goes away and there's a feeling of 'OK, where id you go? We thought you were in this with us.'"

"...folks that are living in parts of South LA that we're working in feel disenfranchised by society. And therefore not likely to pursue or less likely to pursue community change opportunities that come from like city programs or state programs or something like that. They feel like it's only going to create more problems."

"This is a community where a lot of people come in, say they're going to do things and don't follow through. Or say what they're going to say and then they leave. Creates real negative feelings to outside groups."

"Partnering with a community based organization allows us to become a known quantity and also trust, more likely to be trusted because, . . . ,there is a fear from folks in the neighborhoods in South LA that a nonprofit organization from outside of South Los Angeles is not there to do something positive."

"We need to be invited and be clear about what we do and don't do and then when we say so we follow through; it wouldn't take much to break that trust."

That may be why TP faces challenges in getting local community members involved here to the same degree as Compton. The LAUSD is a partner in TreePeople's work removing asphalt and creating green spaces on school campuses in South Central. As a partner, the District has created an MOA, provided legal cover, allowed access to certain resources, and helped coordinate with schools and staff. However, the new trees and greening projects in these South Central schools need the ongoing care and maintenance provided by community members, in order to succeed. TreePeople has had success in greening South Central's Trinity Park, and other public spaces, and perhaps may find that it will need to focus more on those public areas for the time being. More research needs to be done into this particular neighborhood to determine how forward movement in engaging

A Lone Nut in Compton..

the community can proceed. Relying on outside volunteers to come in and do the work has accomplished project tasks but may be detrimental to TP's efforts in involving the South Central community directly.

PERSONAL APPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE WORK

Community engagement, loosely defined, is the process of working collaboratively with and through groups of people affiliated by geographic proximity, special interest, or similar situations to address issues affecting the well-being of those people (CDC, 1997). It is not the same as community organizing, which gets people and institutions to fight for and “win” resources for the community (O'Donnell & Schumer, 1996). Alinsky's intended audience in *Rules for Radicals* (1971) seems to be the community organizer working to create a large social action to induce immediate change. That distinction aside, I think that the basic premise of going only where you are invited, and working within the constituents' experience are very valid. These were the two main components that were supported by my experience and that of the regional managers at TreePeople.

Additionally, I think it important for anyone working in regions with a large proportion of monolingual speakers to be able to speak that language with a high level of proficiency. These regions in South Los Angeles have a high proportion of native Spanish speakers. While I can understand at an intermediate level, I was not as effective as I might have been with my few interactions with the Compton groups had my language abilities been stronger. The focus group I conducted for TreePeople was translated to keep it as smooth and clear as possible. However, the need for a translator meant that I was unable to

A Lone Nut in Compton..

build a rapport with that group that might have resulted in a stronger dialogue. Having this capacity has certainly ameliorated the relationships RMs were creating in region.

One case in point, the RM and EM in Compton stumbled upon what they called the “chismes effect.” Chismes is the Spanish word for gossip.

“I have to attribute a lot of the way I involve myself through what I have come to call the ‘chismes effect’ – you know, gossip. Part of my outreach is just having ladies talk to other ladies. That happens totally on its own, I can’t really take credit but that’s one of the ways our work has spread.”

To me, this was an important thing to learn because it takes into account both cultural competency (Wolff, 2010) and actively engaging in those groups’ hospitality (Esteva & Prakash, 1998). This behavior also suggested to me that the RM was trying to listen to the song behind the words (Heifetz & Linsky, 2002, p. 65). By engaging in “girl talk” for the first several minutes of their meeting, the RM built on their trust and understanding. Also, this chismes effect was not limited to the one school or neighborhood in Compton. As the RM told me, *“because Compton [sic] is geographically small it’s easier for word to get spread. . . we’re there and people are talking about us.”*

Language use intra-organizationally is something that is also vitally important to understand. I felt that language used inside TreePeople began to reflect its behavior towards outside partners and participants. For example, the term “pathways of engagement” can be fraught with peril. If one utilizes this term to merely suggest the offering of a way to be involved, i.e. an invitation to participate, then it is reasonable to infer that there is no manipulation implied. You are simply offering an option to be taken or left. On the other hand, if one uses “pathways of engagement” as a method of leading people

A Lone Nut in Compton..

then manipulation is implied. It shows a direction in which one wishes to lead another. In that moment the sense of equality between the two parties is lessened. Of course, if the communities involved were co-creating the process then this particular example might have never arisen.

"I think where we can be very ardent in, probably can improve based on limited instances, is that we're very careful in the manner in which we convey ourselves. That we have to be very careful not to use patriarchal language or language that makes us appear that we're not trying to be supportive in basically implementing [sic] the things the community wants."

A great deal of time was spent on reviewing language used internally and externally and will be an ongoing theme. It has import for both how the organization will view itself and how it views and works with the others.

I learned that patience, of the long-term variety, might be a hard lesson for an organization to learn. It is certainly one that one respondent mentioned specifically:

"We demand to see success too quickly and you know should just wait a little bit longer. The organization is not necessarily exhibiting that it's not willing to do that but that's an area for improvement, is just general patience."

Successful community engagement takes a long time to build trust and mutual respect, particularly in South Los Angeles. As previously mentioned, these communities are used to outside nonprofits swooping in, doing for, and then leaving. There is a long history of this behavior and has made these communities skeptical of any outside agency coming into its territories. Even with the current success TreePeople is experiencing in Compton and Inglewood, it may take another year or three for the communities at large to truly accept and trust them. Building sustainable and interactive relationships in Compton required a lot of face time and interpersonal activities. This poses a challenge for organizations that

A Lone Nut in Compton..

wish to create strategic and action plans without keeping an eye towards flexibility in how they adopt them. Allowing regional managers to affect necessary changes in programming (language, how it is offered and structured, etc.) was an effective tactic used by the executive management. It has allowed for the communities to have influence in what they participate in and has taught the organization valuable lessons in listening and reacting appropriately. This behavior in turn has exhibited to the community that TreePeople was in earnest and committed to partnering with them for the duration, thereby furthering trust and cooperation. The fact that TP is now working in 25% of Compton schools and parents at other schools inviting them to do more work is evidence of that. As is the deepening of work with Inglewood's Park and Rec Department: *"because we had been partnering there for three years, their Park and Rec had begun to trust TreePeople."*

Another lesson learned is to involve marketing and communications at the start of any community engagement program.

"I think now that we have these regional teams we're realizing that we do need to have more of a communication with the community in asking them for their feedback. But I don't of don't feel that we did that before we went in."

"(Communications) area was kind of brought in after it was done. So, we weren't ready to . . . do traditional marketing, per se."

They need to learn how to create documents that are culturally relevant to the stakeholder (Wolff, 2010), to learn the community's language. Improved communication with partners was also mentioned as a need:

"I think too it's also trying to figure out how to work with our partners to figure out how they communicate, what's the best method. But right now I think it's a little overwhelming considering all the other things we're doing."

"I think there was this lack that also needs to be included in your clearance with partners. How do you work together in communications? Who's responsible for what?"

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Making sure both parties are represented, knowing that they're also going to help promote or help support you."

Addressing these interactions will add to their ability to speak clearly and correctly to board members and the general public at large about the work being done.

Communication's initial involvement may also lead the organization in heightening its self-awareness and internal dialogue. When asked about internal dialogue and communication here is what some respondents had to say:

"We're trying to put in place protocols as to how to capture that information, but as an organization I don't feel, like as in the past, we've really tried to capture and share it as well as we could."

"Well our regional teams share information in our group meetings when they think to share them."

"I would have more focused staff with clear goals, clear responsibilities on their areas. I would have more communication amongst staff."

"They're, you know, doing a pretty good job of sharing, because we have modified ourselves more, which is a good sign, but probably we could do that more quickly. And, we could also chronicle it more so we don't end up repeating the same mistakes later on."

In regards to lessons learned in methodology and data gathering, I definitely enjoyed the interviews and focus group. More time would have allowed me to conduct more than one focus group and conduct additional personal interviews. The very process of conducting these would have, I think, taught me even more about the pragmatics of engaging with community as well as strengthened my praxis. Included in this, of course, is the aforementioned strengthening of my "foreign" language skills in order to connect directly with monolingual speakers of other languages other than having relied on an interpreter.

The largest and last lesson I learned is that community engagement is an area for which my passion has deepened, as has my awareness of how much more I need and want to know. Facilitating the joining of multiple parties to accomplish agreed upon goals in a mutually beneficial and respectful manner is very exciting to me. I continue to seek out other opportunities to learn from others and practice what I have learned through this exercise and experience.

RECOMMENDATIONS

I am hesitant to elaborate upon specific recommendations and trajectories I have made to the departments at TreePeople for enhancing their programs and community engagement strategies, as it might be considered proprietary. However I do have the following recommendations.

First, in order to begin the process of granting communities influence, it is important that TreePeople contextually (Wolff, 2010) translates all of its programmatic materials into Spanish as soon as possible. Work in Compton in particular will not be able to move forward as quickly as it could with this impediment. I think it may also be of vital importance to the work being attempted in South Central. Once the website is renewed, I also advocate for the inclusion of a Spanish version, particularly the educational videos that are available. This is a recommendation that was also shared by Compton's RM and their participants.

Also, along the lines of communication, it is felt that it would be very beneficial if members of communication and marketing were part of the process in building relationships with communities or community partners early on. Referring back to an earlier point, providing an opportunity for marketing and communications to learn the language of the individual communities and their potential partners from the outset will go a long way towards TreePeople's ability to build better rapport and dialogue.

The other, more obvious benefit is to ensure that word is getting out about what is being done and that all parties involved are being equally represented. As I had recommended while at TreePeople, having community participants author, or co-author, materials and event invitations could enhance equal representation. Additionally, having community members co-draft and sign event invites to public officials, or requests for public infrastructure support, could add gravitas and strengthen their standing. This may, in turn, also bolster TreePeople's standing in the eyes of the community and the public officials.

Next, I suggested that the community engagement team reviews the international Stakeholder Engagement Standards to purposefully adopt the accountability principles outlined therein (see Appendix A). I submit that transparency in communicating the principles of community engagement that TreePeople is guided by will only benefit its future relations and work. This is particularly true if TreePeople also embraces social justice as a key part of community engagement.

"The goal of social justice is full and equal participation of all groups in a society that is mutually shaped to meet their needs. Social justice includes a vision of society in

which the distribution of resources is equitable and all members are physically and psychologically safe and secure.” (Bell, 2007, p. 1)

Social justice through environmental justice in South Los Angeles?

Also, I added my voice to those of the interviewees in recommending that steps be taken to strengthen interoffice dialogue and departmental coordination so TreePeople can fully support its community engagement goals and the mission of the organization. In the words of one of the interviewees, *“improve the community building skills as an entire staff.”* There is a lot of “doing” going on but the organization could be better at facilitating internal coordination of activities and information for itself as a community.

“I think that many of the staff are doers rather than facilitators and I think that the way we’re going to get our long term goals is being better facilitators. Doers, yes, we have to do, but better facilitators so we are empowering communities rather than coming in and ‘do it to ya’ or do it alongside you.”

“When doing community engagement, a way to improve would be to do a better job of sharing information with each other.”

“I think that there are certain things that are created . . . that were not tested or sussed out by the community at all. . . . the managers that created it, I don’t think had as much on-the-ground connection as other people had so they could’ve talked to staff more.”

I believe that if the organization as a whole can succeed in this area of building its internal facilitation, and departmental coordination, it could expedite the attainment of regional goals from both the grass roots and the top-down city officials. It will simultaneously improve the side-along approach of doing work with these communities instead of doing for.

Presently TreePeople and SJLI are achieving a collective impact in Inglewood. Food justice and environmental justice are being served through the distribution of fruit trees

A Lone Nut in Compton..

that also provide for a healthier canopy in the city. I recommend that more opportunities to affect a collective impact be actively sought with other local nonprofits. I am utilizing collective impact defined as the commitment of a group of actors from different sectors to a common agenda for solving specific social problems (Kania & Kramer, 2011, p. 36).

Although these two parties do not share a centralized infrastructure they are engaged in mutually reinforcing activities to provide mutually beneficial solutions. The continued practice of curating appropriate community partners will, as stated by interviewees, build trust within the regions. This could be even furthered by growing and purposefully nurturing appropriate networks of other nonprofit organizations in the region (Grant & Crutchfield, 2007).

As a tactic, I submit that this type of networking might also be achieved in collaborating with small businesses. If TreePeople were to purchase supplies needed for communal GreenTeam use from locally owned businesses, I believe the local economy would benefit and TreePeople would exhibit that it is literally investing in the community, thereby furthering local trust and participation. It might then also have the added bonus of leading community members to buy local if they are not already doing so. TreePeople might also “make markets work” (Grant & Crutchfield, 2007) by selling a portion of their nursery trees and native plants to individuals or creating a fruit tree “dedication” program where fruit trees are distributed to regional community members. Regardless of the path, finding a social enterprise, or market approach, could boost its source of funding.

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Next, I recommend that TreePeople take a long-term approach in building capacity to work with cultural specificity. In addition to enhancing short-term success, as TreePeople succeeds in their communal goals and move forward, they will need to learn how to work with multiple types of cultures. This will be of great value and importance particularly as Los Angeles has a myriad of monolingual neighborhoods of varying ethnicities (U.S. Census Bureau, 2010).

One area that I continually came back to in my tenure at TreePeople and which I stumbled upon in the field was the area of marketing and publicity. TreePeople needs to be reaching out to these communities publicly. I think they also need to create opportunities or a platform for their GreenTeams to publicize their efforts and successes within the community. There is a major opportunity to leverage their marketing for both the organization as a whole, but certainly for the work that is being done within, for, and by the communities themselves.

I would also recommend conducting an evaluative focus group involving all of their regional GreenTeams. In the one I conducted for TreePeople at Laurel Street Elementary School in Compton, a potential blind spot was discovered. The GreenTeam members were very involved with the projects based at the school but it seemed it had not occurred to them to bring these practices of tree planting and care back home with them from the school. In other words, they were supportive and engaged in greening their school but did not see it as an opportunity to take the next step and do the same thing on the street where they lived.

A Lone Nut in Compton..

“One Saturday, my son came with me and I realized he had learned a lot. He was asking a lot of questions about trees at home and informing me what trees we had here and what we were missing.” – FG member 3

“I want to see them continue because this is a great thing for making the schools beautiful.” – FG member 2

Additionally, a previously unexpressed request was made during this session.

“Yeah, we would like to start doing other classes.” - FG member 6.

In addition to highlighting potential blind spots for TreePeople, and for the community, focus groups could also evaluate TPs engagement practices. The focus group might serve as a possible point of learning together how best to communicate and partner with each other.

Furthermore, I recommend that TreePeople interview their current and potential community based partners about their communities. With special focus on South Central and Inglewood, it would behoove them to find out how the local nonprofits are reaching out to their constituents and what methods are working better than others. It is a chance to strengthen the bonds of their current partnerships and perhaps engender new ones while simultaneously listening to the community through a different lens. There is also the opportunity to check in with their current community partners as an evaluation of TreePeople’s collaboration with their organization and how TP is perceived within the community.

There are plenty more of recommendations that could be made based on my experience and that of the interviewees. In relation to the literature on the subject of community engagement, TreePeople aimed to go only where invited, listened to the

A Lone Nut in Compton..

community's wants and needs while there, and provided a space for them to empower themselves. TreePeople's own identified areas for improvement include nimbleness and better internal and external communication in addition to those mentioned above. In the end I have to agree with one of the interviewees regarding TreePeople's community engagement. *"It's clunky. Life is clunky and everything is always on a continuum of being developed to be better, if you will let it be that way."* There is discomfort in not having all the tools that one might need but the organization is in full support of the engagement process and committed to the communities in which it is working. After all, a community based and focused organization cannot exist without communal support and participation.

Trees, like trust and relationships, take a long time to grow and require a lot of maintenance and care early on. The tactics of listening to the community members and going where they are invited, combined with picking local and stable community partners is standing TreePeople in good stead. I look forward to seeing how both the communities and the fruits of their combined efforts bear out over the next several years.

In closing my interviews I asked the participants to express what they thought TreePeople was doing well. If they were given the chance to brag to the world what would they say? Here are some of their responses.

"I think we're very friendly. I think people like us. I think we offer good solutions. I think time will tell as we do more research and get more feedback from the community if this is what's relevant to them, but I think we offer good solutions and we offer it in a fun way."

"And what we do very well is stay true to our brand...TreePeople is about community interconnectedness and community leadership. The brand is that the positive change for Los Angeles comes from communities leading it."

"I think we are excellent at educating people. Undoubtedly. TreePeople brings fun and passion and personality and ...just enough of a geek level where people go 'That's cool!'"

"We believe in the power of people."

DESIGN AND METHODS

Research approach and rationale: I have attempted to create an exploratory and descriptive qualitative study that explored my primary question. As researcher, I employed a qualitative approach because it gives a voice to the stakeholders on the topic of community engagement practices between the nonprofit, TreePeople, and community in South Los Angeles. Through discussion rather than quantitative responses, my research sought to review the link between TreePeople and community, see how explicit their connection practices are between themselves, their community partners, and community members of South Los Angeles. By collectivizing multiple views and experiences, my research aimed to paint a more complete picture of how each participant understands TreePeople and their attempts to work in the Inglewood, Compton, and South Central communities in Los Angeles. Three levels of particular attention are pertaining to participants' perspectives of themselves and the community engagement work within that community.

Site and participant selection: I collected five interviews: I personally conducted four in-depth interviews with TreePeople staff (see Appendix E). These staff members are each involved in community engagement to varying degrees and were chosen to provide a range of views. They included an RM, the community engagement manager, a member of communications and marketing, and a senior department manager. All personal interviews

A Lone Nut in Compton..

occurred in the towns of Beverly Hills, Sunland, and Compton in Los Angeles County and were arranged according to the participants' convenience. The questions asked were pre-approved by my advisor (see Appendix C) and the interviewees signed an informed consent letter (see Appendix B).

The fifth interview was publicly conducted by TreePeople management and recorded on video, which was given to me for use in my research. The subject of the interview was D'Artagnan Scorza, the founder of the Social Justice Learning Institute, one of TreePeople's community partners. Since, personal requests for an interview with Mr. Scorza went unanswered, and the recorded interview contained many of the same questions I used in interviews, I found it an acceptable substitute. I also conducted, as a member of TreePeople staff and not an independent student researcher, a focus group of community members from the Laurel Street Elementary School GreenTeam in Compton; the data and audio recording from which I was given permission to use.

The members of the focus group were all Hispanic women who were monolingual Spanish speakers and had lived in Compton from 5 – 16 years. Most of the women were originally from either Ecuador or Mexico and had children attending the school. The participants ranged in age from late twenties to late forties. I chose this particular GreenTeam because they were the newest participants in Compton and, according to the RM, had reached a comfort level where they were direct in their communications. Also, I had met with this group previously as an observer, which made me a little more familiar to them. Additionally, it was a choice of convenience in that: they had met me before, their

A Lone Nut in Compton..

RM would be there to translate for me, they had enough time to go through multiple experiences with TreePeople as a group, they were in an appropriate geographic location, and I had been given access to this group during their normal meeting time.

Data gathering methods: Although this is an Option 2 Course-Linked Capstone for the Leadership, Coalition, and Community Building course, which did not require original data, I did conduct some original research to supplement my report. I conducted standardized open-ended interviews (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 182) and engaged as participant as observer (Hesse-Biber & Leavy, 2011, p.206). I also utilized references listed in the bibliography to inform on the theories and practices of community engagement.

Interviews were on a one-to-one basis. In general, I followed the protocols as laid out in Appendix D. Prior to each interview, I explained and presented the consent forms to the participant for their signatures. Each of the four interviews were audio recorded and I also took notes. After the interviews I transcribed the recordings and sent the transcripts to the interviewees. The full digital recordings were also made available to two participants. In every case, participants were invited to review, delete, or edit their content as necessary and reminded that they could remove themselves from the research without prejudice at anytime. Participants understood that they might be quoted directly but that their names would not be used in any part of the report. All data was stored securely and transcripts and audio files will be destroyed following Capstone week. This includes notes from participatory observation undertaken at the office and TreePeople events.

Data organization: I used the method of open and axial coding, and comparative analysis as informed by Corbin and Strauss (2008) (see Appendix J) and organized the data according to emerging themes as brought out in the interviews.

Analysis procedures: Over the course of my research, I employed a constant comparison method, as informed by Glaser and Strauss (1967) to analyze the data in order to extract themes that addressed my sub-categories and primary research question. This method allowed me to compare the new data with that from previously collected data in earlier studies.

METHODOLOGICAL LIMITATIONS

I recognize that there were several methodological limitations with regards to this research project. For example, one limitation related to establishing working definitions for key terms such as “engagement” and “community.” These terms functioned as standard points of reference for each participant and it was important to land on a common understanding of their meaning. Another major limitation was time constraints. These time constraints arose from both the researcher and the participants because everyone involved in this research project also attended to other obligations in life. Thus, in order to properly conduct this research, I navigated through any scheduling conflicts that needed to be addressed. In one instance, an interview had to take place over the phone, which resulted in a weaker audio recording. Also, I was not able to conduct a personal interview with the leader of a community partner but was given the recording from a publicly held interview, which was conducted by TreePeople management. Multiple TP managers, who worked with this leader on a regular basis, assured me that the leader regularly repeats the

themes quoted above to them and others. I was told that it was very likely that I would not hear anything different had I been able to secure the interview myself.

Additionally, not all participants received written transcripts due to time limitations. In those instances the full audio recording was given for their review with instructions to send commentary, changes or deletion requests back to me, same as if they were utilizing written transcripts. Given the time estimates of the past few months I was not able to interview the full range of ten participants I had hoped to. The research was narrowed to the perspectives offered by this small sample population. My primary concern about this limitation was that I could not include representatives from a wider variety of communities and organizations. Additionally, the interviewees inevitably harbor certain biases. While one strategy would have been to contrast these bias perspectives with a variety of other perspectives, I was limited in this regard because my research included only five interviews. To help mitigate possible bias from the interviewees I engaged in participatory observation at regional TreePeople events and conducted a focus group. Data collected from participatory observation was limited by the amount of events held and the number I attended. Additionally, I was limited in this regard by the number of additional participants who were willing to speak with me about their experience. The focus group included seven female Compton residents who were monolingual Spanish speakers, which meant I needed a translator. As discussed previously, I felt this was a barrier to the process. Conducting focus groups from each of TP's areas of focus was not possible due to time constraints and availability of communal participants.

Admittedly, I am unaware of the full range of social identities in the South Los Angeles communities of Compton, Inglewood, and South Central. This lack of awareness raises the probability that my participants may provide either extremely similar, or largely splintered, points of view. During the course of this research, I of course held myself accountable for issues concerning confidentiality and professional integrity particularly when navigating between relationships between community members, partners, and the organization that is currently working with them. In order to maintain a standard of trustworthiness I adapted my protocol to follow the best practices of qualitative research.

ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

In terms of ethical considerations, a number of specific items must be addressed. First, the *respect for intellectual property* was a primary concern in my research. Because most organizations see their work as nearly proprietary, it remained important to employ a certain amount of sensitivity. This sensitivity acknowledged that organizations and community partners/members may have been reluctant to discuss some of the intentions behind their work, as well as how their work reflected aspects of their societal standing. Along similar lines, *confidentiality* also represented a similar ethical concern once I had gathered information. Because subjects may have exhibited deep personal connections with their work and communal relationships, I asked permission to disclose any information I have garnered. If one of my informants had asked to exclude his or her name from the research, it was important that I honor this request.

While *Objectivity* is never achievable in its entirety, it represented a conscious concern in my research. Knowing that I have a passion for intercultural diplomacy and

community building, it was important that I remained neutral about the information and the sources with which I came into contact. Keeping objectivity in mind, it was similarly important that *honesty and integrity* were used as ethical guidelines during the course of my research. It was of crucial importance that findings were presented in a way that best reflected the true nature of the research gathered. I was also aware of the necessity to honor any promises or agreements that were made with research participants.

Additionally, *the protection of human subjects* presents itself as a consideration whenever human sources are included as research subjects. In my approach to using human sources, I sought to minimize the harm and risks involved such that I could maximize the potential benefits. Finally, *non-discrimination* is always a significant ethical concern in choosing research subjects. Because of the timeframe involved, I could not have too large of a sample population for the scope of this project. However, it was important that I did not stereotype or discriminate whatsoever when engaging in the interview or focus group components of the research. In addition to my own personal beliefs, the approaches listed above are based primarily in the ethics of care and social justice as described by Rossman and Rallis (2003). In regards to the ethic of care, I tried to be very mindful of not only my relationships with TP staff but also of their relationships with each other, their constituents, and their community partners. It was my intention to not risk the embarrassment, damage, or exploitation of any of those relationships. The ethic of social justice was most present in the focus group. There, I paid particular attention to voices that were previously silent (Rossman & Rallis, 2003, p. 72) on TreePeople's engagement practices and programs.

CONCLUSION

Working within the South Los Angeles regions of Compton, Inglewood, and historic South Central, TreePeople's community engagement practices work best when they operate by invitation and in collusion with the participants; particularly as observed in Compton. They have shown that they are willing to adapt programs and projects to meet the needs and wants of their constituents and have been encouraged to continue that practice everywhere. To repeat the success of community participation they experience in Compton, they will need to learn how to communicate effectively in a culturally relevant manner with the various communities residing in Inglewood and South Central, inviting greater communal influence and participation. Additionally, the other members of the community, the decision makers and officials, must be engaged to enact policy and infrastructures that support the community's efforts. TreePeople staff could reach officials directly to research official environmental positions and plans for the community in order to find appropriate areas to collaborate. Or, as they have successfully demonstrated with the LID ordinance, TreePeople can continue to proactively introduce environmental policy that benefits the city.

Internally, as some staffers have said, the better TP can facilitate change and cooperation within their organization, the sharper those skills will be when working outside their own doors. I would further add that communicating their success internally, to donors and board members, is just as important as publicizing that success within region. Providing GreenTeams a platform to share their work and successes will raise local awareness and strengthen their ownership in the programs and projects. Publicizing to

A Lone Nut in Compton..

donors, of course carries the possibility of garnering continued funding. Community engagement as an organizational practice is relatively new for TreePeople. It has only been within the last three or four years that the shift was made from the pejorative “white knight” approach of charging in “knowing and doing what is best” for others to actively listening and engaging with their constituents. Lessons have been learned and the embrace of adaptability and inclusivity of local knowledge and decision-making are starting to show signs of success. The community-based approach of co-creating programming has shown the greatest success in Compton. The engagement of top-down officials has garnered successful greening projects in South Central’s schools. TreePeople has developed a strong community partner relationship with SJLI. It is my hope that they continue to learn from each of these strong points and find the way to bring those skills into each of the other regions. As it was stated earlier by TreePeople management:

“We believe in the power of people...the positive change for Los Angeles comes from communities leading it.”

By grounding themselves in that belief and continuing to employ best practices, and perhaps some of the tactics recommended herein, I believe they will succeed. After all, “a great oak is only a little nut that held its ground.”

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Albion, M. (2010). Monk, Architect, Diplomat, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Leland Stanford, Jr. University, Fall2010, 21-22. Retrieved from:
http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/monk_architect_diplomat
- Alinsky, S. D. (1969). *Reveille for Radicals* (2nd ed.). New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Alinsky, S. D. (1971). *Rules for Radicals: A Pragmatic Primer for Realistic Radicals*. New York, NY: Vintage Books.
- Bell, L. A. (2007). Theoretical Foundations for Social Justice Education. In M. Adams, L. A. Bell, & P. Griffin (Eds.), *Teaching for Diversity and Social Justice* (2nd ed.) (pp. 1-14). New York, NY: Routledge.
- Bolman, L. G., & Deal, T.E. (2003). *Reframing Organizations: Artistry, Choice, and Leadership* (3rd ed). San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.
- California Budget Project. (2010, June). *Making Ends Meet*. Retrieved from
<http://www.lafla.org/pdf/MakingEndsMeet.pdf>
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. (1997). *Principles of Community Engagement*. Atlanta, GA: Public Health Program Office. Retrieved from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website: <http://www.cdc.gov/phppo/pce/index.htm>
- Compton Unified School District. (2012). 2010-2011 SARC Report. Compton, California. Retrieved from
http://www.axiomadvisors.net/livesarc/SARCIndexPDFs/19734370000000_10-11_1.pdf
- Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.
- Esteva, G., & Prakash, M. S. (1998). *Grass Roots Post-Modernism: Remaking the Soil of Cultures*. London: Zed Books Ltd.
- Glaser, B.G., & Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory: Strategies for Qualitative Research*. New York: Aldine de Gruyter. Retrieved from
http://books.google.com/books?id=rtiNK68Xt08C&pg=PA101&source=gbs_toc_r&cad=4#v=onepage&q&f=false
- Heifetz, R. A. & Linsky, M., (2002). *Leadership on the Line: Staying Alive Through the Dangers of Leading*. Boston, MA: Harvard Business School Press.

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Hesse-Biber, S. N., & Leavy, P. (2011). *The Practice of Qualitative Research* (2nd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Hofstede, G. (2001). *Culture's Consequences: Comparing Values, Behaviors, Institutions, and Organizations Across Nations*. Second Edition, Thousand Oaks CA: SAGE Publications.

Kania, J., & Kramer M. (2011). Collective Impact, *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Leland Stanford, Jr. University, Winter2011, 36-41. Retrieved from http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/collective_impact

McLeod-Grant, H., & Crutchfield, L. R. (2007). Creating High-Impact Nonprofits. *Stanford Social Innovation Review*, Leland Stanford, Jr. University, Fall2007, 32-41. Retrieved from http://www.ssireview.org/articles/entry/creating_high_impact_nonprofits/

McPherson, E.G., Simpson, J.R., Peper, P.K., Scott, K.I., & Xiao, Q. (2000). *Tree Guidelines for Coastal Southern California Communities*. Sacramento, CA: Local Government Commission. Retrieved from http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/programs/uesd/uep/products/2/cufr_48.pdf

McPherson, E.G., Simpson, J.R., Xiao, Q., & Wu, C. (2008, January). *Los Angeles 1-Million Tree Canopy Cover Assessment*. USDA Forest Service General Technical Report. Retrieved from http://www.fs.fed.us/psw/publications/documents/psw_gtr207.pdf

Mosely, J. E., Katz, H., Hasenfeld, Y., & Anheier, H. K. (2003). The Challenge of Meeting Social Needs in Los Angeles: Nonprofit Human Service Organizations in a Diverse Community. Los Angeles, CA: UCLA School of Public Policy and Social Research. Retrieved from <http://www.spa.ucla.edu/ccs/docs/challenge.pdf>

O'Donnell, S., & Schumer, E. (1996, January/February). Community Building & Community Organizing: Issues in Creating Effective Models. *Shelterforce*, 85. Retrieved from <http://www.nhi.org/online/issues/85/combuild.html>

Rossman, G. B., & Rallis, S. F. (2003). *Learning in the Field: An Introduction to Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE Publications.

Scorza, D., personal communication, January 19, 2012.

Sullivan, W.C., & Kuo, E.E. (1996). Do Trees Strengthen Urban Communities, Reduce Domestic Violence? *Arborist News*, 5(3), 33-34. Retrieved from <http://www.aces.edu/urban/metronews/vol1no4/forestry.html>

U.S. Census Bureau Retrieved from <http://2010.census.gov/2010census/>

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Williams, K. (2008). Effective Leadership for Multicultural Teams. In C. B. Halverson and S. A. Tirmizi (Eds.), *Effective Multicultural Teams: Theory and Practice* (pp. 135-172). Breiningsville, PA: Springer Science & Business Media B.V.

Wolff, T. (2010). *The Power of Collaborative Solutions: Six Principles and Effective Tools for Building Communities*. San Francisco, CA: Jossey-Bass.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Sources of additional information and tools for community engagement practices that I have reviewed and used for reference:

Human Centered Design Toolkit - IDEO.org
Pioneers Of Change.net
FSG-impact.org
American Evaluation Association – eval.org
Multi-Stakeholder Process Portal - portals.wi.wur.nl/msp/
CopenhagenCentre.org
KeystoneAccountability.org
Participatory Learning and Action, by the International Institute for Environment and Development - iied.org
Citizen Participation and Local Governance - logolink.org
The International Association of Public Participation – iap2.org

Stakeholder Engagement Standard (2011) is produced by Account Ability, is 39 pages long and outlines the following in depth:

1. The aims and benefits of stakeholder engagement
2. Commitment and integration
3. The establishment of purpose scope, and the mandate and ownership of stakeholders
4. The engagement process

In my research I found that multiple companies and organizations look to this as a standard by which to guide their community engagement practices. The pdf document is available for download at www.accountability.org

After reading it I would suggest that it be used in all community building/stakeholder engagement courses as a reference tool.

APPENDIX B

INFORMED CONSENT LETTER

Jason Schlatter, Candidate for Master of Arts,
Intercultural Service, Leadership, and Management
School for International Training Graduate Institute
1 Kipling Road
Brattleboro, VT 05301

Date:

Dear _____

I am a student at the School for International Training (SIT). My degree requires that I conduct a final research project and I am asking you to participate in that project.

I am interested in learning about the process and effects of TreePeople's community engagement in the South Los Angeles area. No individual organizational leader or community member will be the focus of this research and data will only be used in aggregate form.

Your participation will entail one interview lasting about 45 minutes in a mutually agreed upon location of your convenience. You will be given the interview questions before the actual interview begins to gain preliminary insight as to what will be discussed. I would like to audio record the interviews only if you feel comfortable with this procedure. If you choose that I do not audio record the interviews, I will take notes on the topics discussed.

For your review, I will bring you a copy of my notes or the transcripts, once typed up. Bringing you this information will afford you the opportunity to verify the information you provide me. I request that you read the information and feel at liberty to add, delete or

A Lone Nut in Compton..

change any part as necessary. You will then return the document to me. I will use the information that you verify as accurate in my report.

I will not release notes, transcripts or audiotapes to any other person. I will shred the documents and erase audiotapes after three months.

I will protect the identities of participants through the use of pseudonyms in this and any future publications or presentations of my research. If you are interested, you may choose your own pseudonym. Participants should understand that they may be quoted directly, but that their names will not be used in any part of the report. All data will be stored in a secure location and transcripts will be destroyed after three months. Please understand that you may withdraw from interview or the study at any time without prejudice.

I appreciate your willingness to give your time to this project and to help me learn about data collection and process of community engagement and leadership skills in your community. If you have any questions, feel free to ask me or my advisor, who can be reached at ken.williams@sit.edu.

Thank you,

_____ Date:_____

Jason Schlatter

I have read the above and discussed it with the researcher. I understand the study and agree to participate.

Signature:_____ Date:_____

APPENDIX C

Interview Guides – Open for some divergence as lead by the nature of the interview.

Questions to be given to TreePeople staff, managers, and senior management:

- Tell me about your position at TreePeople (incl: length of time w/organization, meaning of title, duties and responsibilities)
- Why does TreePeople exist?
- What can you tell me about why TreePeople is working in South Los Angeles?
- Why did you choose to focus your work in that region of Los Angeles?
- Do you consider South Los Angeles (Inglewood, Compton, South Central) as a community open to outside cooperation? How? Why? Why not? What would cooperation mean?
- What are the current methods you are using to involve yourself in the community? Why did you choose them?
- Why do you see the need for local nonprofit (aka community partner) organizational assistance? How did you come to work with them? Why do you continue to cooperatively work with that/those nonprofit(s)?
- Why do your community partner organization(s) exist?
- Please tell me about this relationship and in what ways you work together. (i.e. collective impact, mutual input into program delivery, guidance, expertise, introductions, etc.)?
- Have there been any unintended consequences resulting in your collaboration?
- How might TreePeople be benefiting from this partnership?
- What activities, if any, are you engaged in within the community that are unrelated to your partnership with the other organization?
- How does the community influence your engagement with community organizations and the community itself? (Direct/indirect input and feedback, mere demographics or statistical environmental data, etc.)
- How are current local organizations influencing the community?
- How would you characterize the communal participation level?
- What are the stages for creating a project?
- In creating a cooperative project what is the community, nonprofit partner, and inter-organizational involvement at different stages of the project?
- What have you learned about the practice of community engagement from your time here at TreePeople?
- If the organization was willing to learn and grow based on your experience, what areas do you see for improvement and what is working well?

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Questions to be given to community partner staff and/or senior management:

- Tell me about your position here (incl: length of time w/organization, meaning of title, duties and responsibilities)
- Why does this organization exist?
- How would you characterize the relationship between your organization and the community in which it is based and serves?
- What can you tell me about why TreePeople is working in South Los Angeles?
- How would you describe your relationship with them?
- How did you come to work with TreePeople?
- Do you consider South Los Angeles (Inglewood, Compton, South Central) as a community open to outside cooperation? How? Why? Why not?
- Please tell me about this relationship and in what ways you work together. (i.e. collective impact, mutual input into program delivery, guidance, expertise, introductions, etc.)?
- Have there been any unintended consequences resulting in your collaboration?
- How might TreePeople be benefiting from this partnership?
- How might your organization be benefiting from this partnership?
- How might the community be benefiting from this partnership?
- Are you aware of how your community members are interacting with TreePeople? How would you characterize that relationship?
- Do you feel that the community members have any influence on TreePeople's presence, programs, or the organization itself? If so, in what way?
- What about your organization, does it have any influence on TreePeople's presence and programs within your community?
- What does community engagement mean to you? How important is it?
- What does outsider participation mean to the community?
- Could you share with me your observations of how other outsider organizations are engaging with your community?
- How does this community influence how your organization chooses to operate within this region? Or does it?
- How would you characterize the communal participation level?
- What are/were the stages for creating a project with TreePeople?
- In creating a cooperative project what is the community, nonprofit partner, and inter-organizational involvement at different stages of the project?
- Based on your experience so far, if TreePeople were interested in receiving feedback on how they bring themselves into a community, what would you say to them?
- What have you learned about the practice of community engagement from your time here?

A Lone Nut in Compton..

Questions to be given to people who live in those communities of South Los Angeles and are participating in TreePeople Programs:

- How long have you lived in this neighborhood?
- How would you characterize this community?
- How did you come to hear of TreePeople?
- Why does TreePeople exist?
- How did they come to be working in your community?
- Is there a need for them to be here?
 - If so, how would you like TreePeople to engage with you? Do you wish to be part of the discussion?
- What does their presence and work here mean to your community?
- What programs or activities are TreePeople operating here?
- Which program or activity are you involved with?
- How did you come to be involved?
- Why did you choose to be?
- How would you characterize the communal participation level?
- Beyond soliciting your participation in the program/activity, how else does TreePeople interact with you? With your neighborhood?
- How does this neighborhood influence TreePeople or what it is doing in your neighborhood?
- Are you aware of other outside organizations working or wanting to work in your neighborhood? How does their approach, or way of interacting, with your community compare with how TreePeople approaches you?
- Based on your experience so far, if TreePeople were interested in receiving feedback on how they bring themselves into a community, what would you say to them?

APPENDIX D

Notes

Interview Guidelines:

- Interviews will last somewhere between 45 minutes and 1 hour.
- Participant pool is comprised only of male and female adult members of TreePeople, community based organizations, and the communities of Inglewood, Compton, and South Central Los Angeles.
- Each participant will be given an informed consent letter to sign.
- Interviews will be held at a mutually agreed upon location of participants' convenience.
- Participants will be supplied with interview questions before the interview, wherever possible.
- All interviews will be digitally recorded (if allowed by participant) and then transcribed to an electronic medium.
- I will be conscious of all ethical considerations during each interview.
- I will encourage participants to share information by asking guided and open ended questions.
- I will try to limit additional dialogue to only clarifying and restating questions whenever necessary to deepen the conversation.
- I will remind participants that they will get a chance to review, edit, or delete any or all of their interview transcripts prior to their inclusion in my writings.

APPENDIX E

Focus Group

The Ladies of the Laurel Street Elementary School, Compton –GreenTeam Participants

FG 1 – Female, 15 year resident

FG 2 – Female, 16 year resident

FG 3 – Female, 8 year resident

FG 4 – Female, 9 year resident

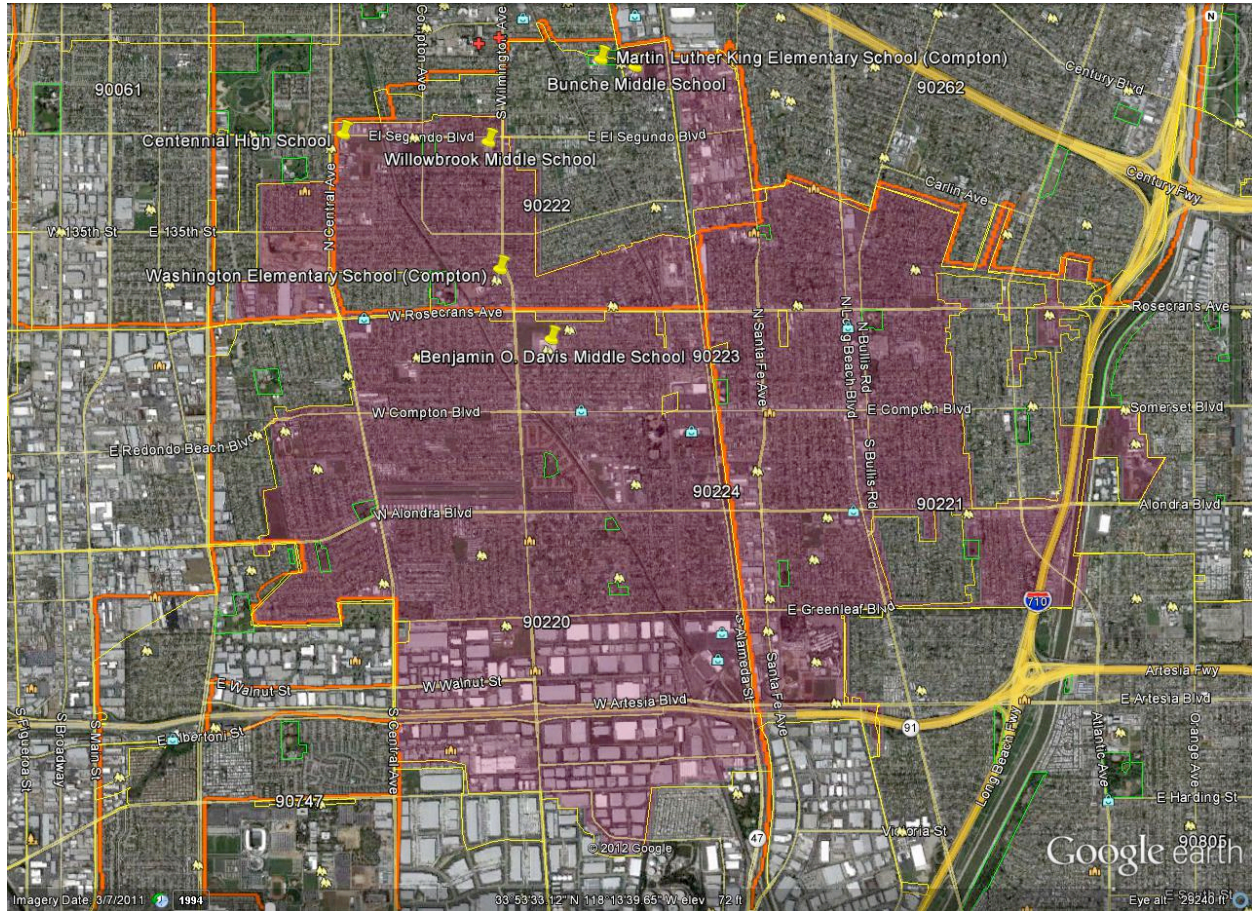
FG 5 – Female, 13 year resident

FG 6 – Female, 5 year resident

FG 7 – Female, unknown years of residency

APPENDIX F

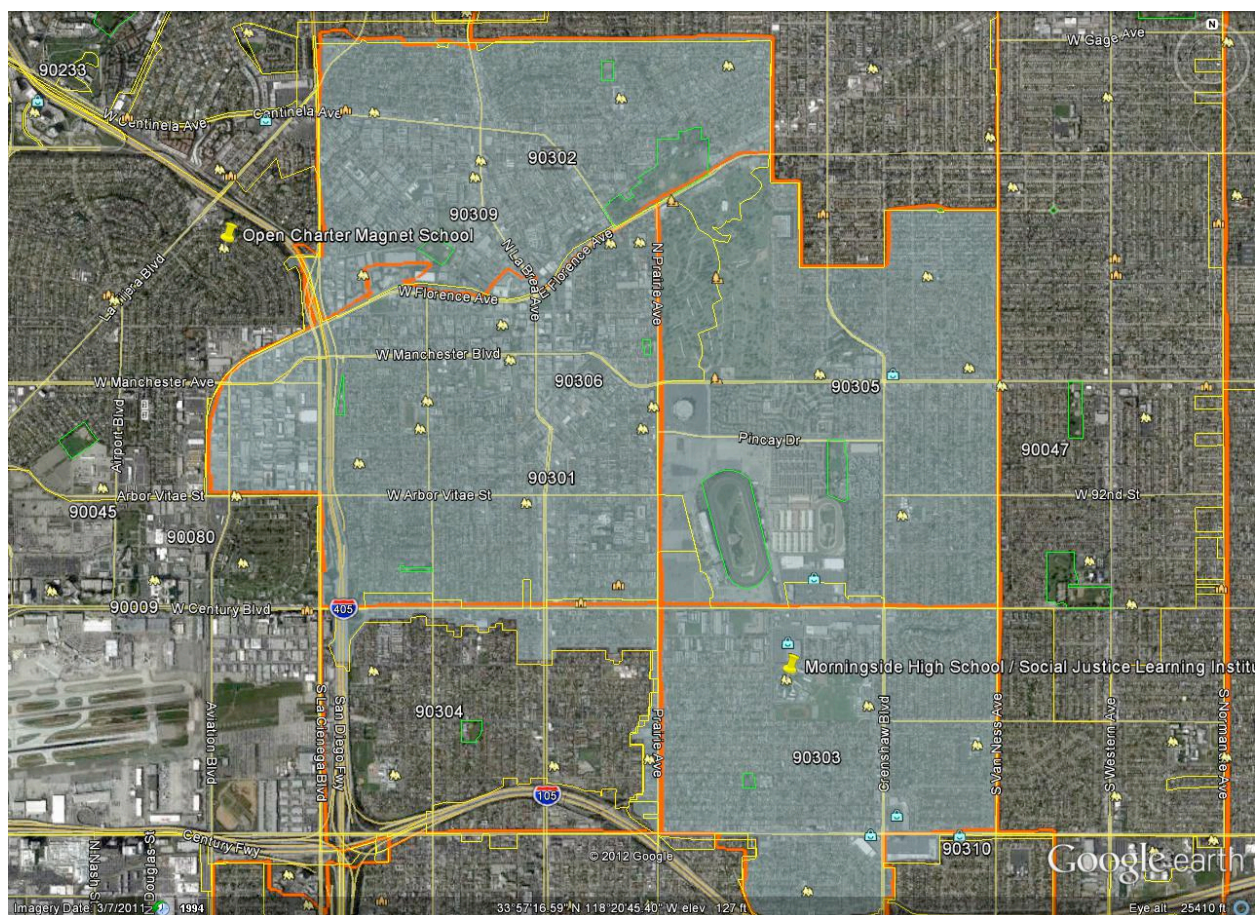
Compton



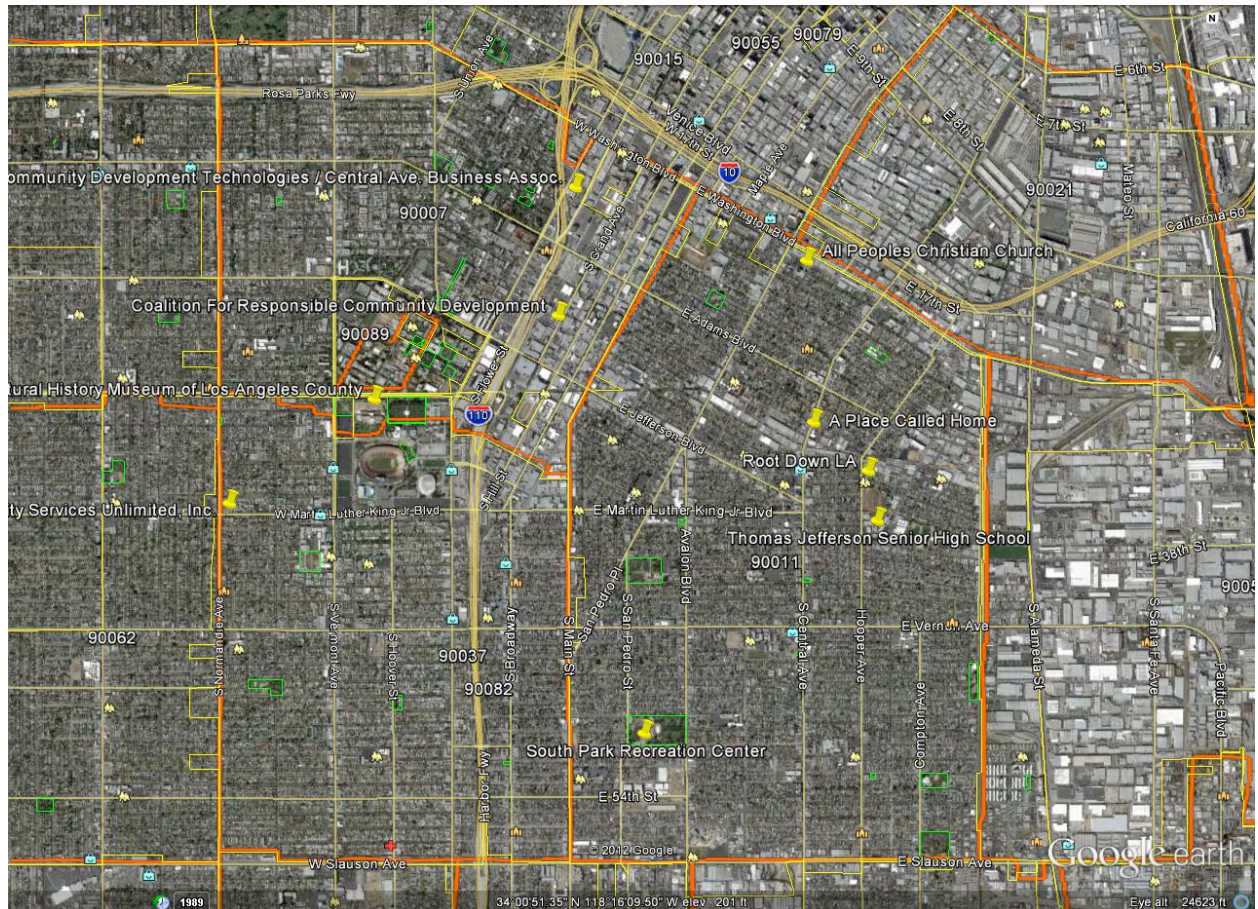
A Lone Nut in Compton..

APPENDIX G

Inglewood



APPENDIX H
Historic South Central



APPENDIX I

Bolman & Deal - Basic Human Resource Strategies

Human Resource Principle	Specific Practices
Build and implement an HRM strategy	Develop a shared philosophy for managing people Build systems and practices to implement the philosophy
Hire the right people	Know what you want Be selective
Keep them	Reward well Protect jobs Promote from within Share the wealth
Invest in them	Invest in learning Create development opportunities
Empower them	Provide information and support Encourage autonomy and participation Redesign work Foster self-managing teams Promote egalitarianism
Promote diversity	Be explicit and consistent about the organization's diversity philosophy Hold managers accountable

APPENDIX J

Axial Coding:

Crosscutting or relating concepts to each other. Though this is not specifically addressed in this chapter, note that when two concepts are discussed in the same memo I am using what was called in previous editions of this book axial coding.

Comparative Analysis:

Comparing incident against incident for similarities and differences. Incidents that are found to be conceptually similar to previously coded incidents are given the same conceptual label and put under the same code. Each new incident that is coded under a code adds to the general properties and dimensions of that code, elaborating it and bringing in variation.

Open Coding:

Breaking data apart and delineating concepts to stand for blocks of raw data. At the same time, one is qualifying those concepts in terms of their properties and dimensions.

Taken from page 195.

Corbin, J., & Strauss, A. (2008). *Basics of Qualitative Research* (3rd ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage Publications.

APPENDIX K

RESEARCHER BIOGRAPHY

My name is Jason Schlatter, and I am a candidate in the Master of Arts program at the School for International Training Graduate Institute (SIT) in Brattleboro, Vermont. I have a professional background in international marketing, film, finance, philanthropy, and theatre arts. My long-term professional aspirations are to work in intercultural diplomacy and stakeholder engagement to facilitate the collaboration of various organizations and groups in multiple sectors. I am aware that my own subjectivity had influence on my research. My enjoyment of the field of community engagement, and the wish to see these communities succeed, cannot be denied as having some influence on my work. I have done my best to remain aware of those emotionally based components while compiling this information and submitting the report.